

Media Release

Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

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Prescott Valley Man scammed out of nearly \$8800

Over the last few weeks, a 64-year-old Prescott Valley man lost in excess of \$8700 through an email ruse involving a woman supposedly stranded in Nigeria trying to return to the US. The victim was convinced he was helping someone in need and wired money in 4 separate transactions.

Deputies were called to the victim's home and his wife explained she had just discovered the scam and the loss of several thousand dollars due to her husband's actions. The victim admitted he was befriended by a "woman" from Nigeria through email contact weeks prior. They never spoke, only communicating by email. The woman eventually asked for financial assistance claiming she was stuck in Nigeria after losing her passport, money and other personal property. She requested money for expenses including air fare and processing fees. On July 2, 2014, the victim sent \$1000 via Western Union to a requested money drop.

Apparently the initial payment was not enough for the suspect as the requests for money continued. The victim complied and wired additional money on July 5, 6, and 10. The transfer on the 10th was in the amount of \$6000 and wired a bank in Nigeria. Total loss by now was \$8700. Finally, on July 11, 2014, after receiving a request for \$4000, the victim told his wife about the relationship and payments and she immediately called YCSO.

Although embarrassed by the incident, they asked YCSO to share this story so others may avoid the scam. They couple is on a fixed income and the loss has been very difficult.

These scams are difficult to investigate because they generally involve the use of public computers by suspects in countries where law enforcement intervention in fraud cases is rare. There has been limited success in prosecuting some cases in the past with assistance of federal law enforcement and Interpol. Much of the data received by federal law enforcement from U.S. victims comes from the website www.ic3.gov. This site is a clearing house which allows victims to file a complaint while the general public can obtain information on the latest scams.

As always, please share this information with family and friends who may be vulnerable to such tricks in the hope of preventing more victims.

Citizens can contact the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office with information or questions at 928-771-3260 or the YCSO website:

www.ycsoaz.gov